A BANDIT CHIEF

The Great Italian Brigand Mussolino Captured at Last.

HIS CAREER UNSURPASSED

By Any of the Highwaymen of English Fiction from Robin Hood to Claud Duval—His Crimes and His Virtues as Narrated by His Enemies and Friends—Kind to the Poor of Calabria—The Government Embarrassed by His Arrest.

The world-famous brigand Mussolino has been caught after a tremendous hunt, as the cable dispatches have already told, and now the poor Italian Government does not know what to do with him.

The government hunted him for three years among the mountains of Calabria, sent regiments of soldiers in pursuit of him, lost scores of lives, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and only succeeded in increasing the local popularity of the brigand.

Now that he has been caught by accident, the government realizes that it has something much worse than a white elephant on its hands. The troubles that confront the authorities are numerous and maddening. In the first place it is likely that Mussolino will be rescued, and after that many more lives will be lost. Then the old hunt will have to begin over again. If Mussolino be not rescued it is highly probable that the jury will fail to convict him, and then he will walk out proudly into the world and defy the government again with the seal of legal approval on him.

Mussolino is the most astonishing comic opera brigand that ever lived. Never in ancient or modern times has an outlaw been so successful and so audacious. In the daring and magnitude of his operations he surpasses Robin Hood, Claud Duval, Fra Diavolo and all the famous brigands who have been so celebrated in history, literature and opera. It is little wonder that the people of South Italy, who hate the national government, adore this successful defier of it.

As soon as Mussolino was caught he was locked up in a prison near Reggio, the strongest in the whole province of Calabria. This building is an old monastery, which, when originally built in the middle ages, was constructed so as to be able to resist any attack. When the monks were dispersed by the Italian government the monastery was turned into a prison, as being the most suitable building for that purpose among the lawless and bloodthirsty people of Calabria. It has a deep moat around it, tremendous inner and outer walls, draw bridges, towers, keeps, chapels and all the features of a mediæval fortress-monastery. It is a romantic and gloomy pile.

The monks' cells have been transformed into prison cells, and into one of the most inaccessible of these, right in the heart of the prison, Mussolino was put. It had only one little barred window looking on a gloomy court yard.

On the day following Mussolino's incarceration here, the prison authorities were horrified to see a gigantic, glaring eye drawn on the wall of Mussolino's cell. It was accompanied by other cabalistic signs.

Now, the eye is known to be a commonly used symbol of the dreaded Picciotteria Society. It means, "All is well," and was obviously addressed by Mussolino's friends to him. The Picciotteria is a society resembling the Camorra and the Mafia, and is perhaps more efficient than either of them. It operates in Calabria, the mountainous country that forms the toe of the boot of Italy, and is, therefore, between Naples, where the Camorra flourishes, and the island of Sicily, which own the Mafia's sway.

One of the main objects of the Picciotteria is to live handsomely without work. All prosperous persons are required to contribute regularly of their substance to the Picciotteria, and in case of failure they are shot or stabbed. Owing to the hatred of the government felt by the poor people of the locality, they are quite favorably disposed to the Picciotteria. It is almost impossible to find a jury to convict a member of the society of a crime, because all taking part in the trial are liable to lose their lives, and also because of the amiable disposition of the people toward the Picciotteria.

When the authorities saw the cabalistic signs on the wall they realized that there was either treachery in the prison, or the conspirators were astonishingly bold. They then moved Mussolino into a still more secluded cell, whence the only light came through a hole in the roof. Yet on the following day there appeared another eye and more signs on a spot on the tower which Mussolino could just catch with his eye. Among the signs were right angles placed in different positions, a dagger and a crescent.

When the governor of the prison visited Mussolino's cell the brigand, with the astonishing bravado that has always characterized him, showed a knife, file and rope that had been sent to him by his friends. Of course these were taken away from him, but he remarked with a smile that he could get plenty more. As he spoke down through the roof came a wad of paper weighted with a pebble at the governor's feet. Mussolino snatched it up and glanced at it. Before it could be taken from him it was torn to pieces.

The sentries were then doubled, and it was ordered that a watch should be kept on all parts of the building during every night. The first night was dark. Midnight had just passed when mysterious whistlings were heard on the roof of the prison. A soldier fired in the direction from which he thought the sound came and shot a comrade. In spite of this, and all searching, the sounds went on all night, consisting of whistling and peculiar calls.

It is believed that there are secret passages under the ancient monastery with which the conspirators are familiar, and that there are also secret staircases in the massive walls, as there frequently are in such buildings. The walls are in some places 20 feet thick.

The prison authorities were afraid to put Mussolino in an underground cell because they feared one of his confederates would open a secret trapdoor in the floor and then he would vanish down a subterranean passage. Mussolino was, therefore, kept in a cell above ground, and not only was this cell watched day and night, but the floor above and below.

While all this fuss was going on around Mussolino the chief witness against him, Francesco Vivanti, who was being kept under guard for his own safety, was stolen and carried off to the mountains. It is not likely that he will ever be seen again alive.

The government has now ordered the trial of Mussolino to be moved to Lucca, in Northern Italy, in order to get away from the terrorism of the Picciotteria. But even there it is doubtful if a jury can be found to convict him. When these societies can make their terrorism felt in America, it is not likely that any corner of Italy will be free from it.

Mussolino was caught while taking a stroll through the streets of Urbino. He had grown tired of dodging the soldiers in his mountain fastness and was making a leisurely tour through Italy, with the intention, it is believed, of taking a trip to France and then possibly to America.

A carabiniero, as the Italian national police are called, was struck by his wild appearance and arrested him on suspicion of his being a missing murderer, not Mussolino. The bandit made a rush for liberty, but the stalwart carabinieri—they always travel in couples—were too quick for him, and they held him. Then he offered them 10,000 lire to let him go. The officer who first noticed Mussolino was impressed by the prisoner's strong Calabrian accent, and it then occurred to him that it might be the famous bandit. This suspicion was quickly verified, and the lucky carabiniero will collect the reward of $20,000 offered for the capture of Mussolino. It is true that he stands an excellent chance of being picked off with stiletto or pistol by some of the bandit's friends.

Thus another stage has been reached in the astonishing romance of the brigand Mussolino. That it will be the last one nobody believes. Mussolino is now twenty-six years old. In his youth he was an associate of thieves and criminals. He rose to a prominent place in Calabrian society and politics through his membership in secret societies.

One night he had occasion to stab one Vicenzo Zoccoli, the adherent of a political enemy of his named Francesco Fava. Zoccoli intended to kill him, and Mussolino considered it a laudable act to turn the tables on him. Such an act was certainly not willful murder according to the views of Calabria.

But through the influence of Fava's and Zoccoli's friends Mussolino was convicted and sentenced to twenty-three years at hard labor, the most horrible punishment conceivable to him.

"You have sworn away my life!" he yelled in court, "I will have revenge."

He was taken to the Gerace penitentiary. From this he escaped within three days to the mountains and began his career of brigandage. First he turned his attention to the Zoccolis and all those who had taken part in convicting him. He killed the judge and all the prosecuting lawyers and officers. Four of them he slew in one afternoon. Altogether he has removed fifteen of his enemies at the trial.

As Mussolino's depredations and outrages grew in number the government reenforced the carabinieri with soldiers. At one time 20,000 soldiers were in pursuit of him. All the people were his friends. Soldiers were shot, stabbed, dropped over precipices, led into traps and hindered in every way. He lived in labyrinthine caves, guarded by dozens of sentries.

Mussolino had a hundred disguises. One day dressed as a landed proprietor, he entered into conversation with the military commander and told him that the map he was using was entirely wrong. He went into the towns whenever he needed supplies. He even went to church, for he professed to be devoutly religious.

Here is an instance of his audacity: The little church of the Madonna of the Consolation, in Calabria, the City of Cathedrals, was filled with devout worshipers assembled for vespers on a certain Sunday afternoon.

There knelt peasants, brilliant in the best their wardrobes could afford; there aristocrats, rich in jewels and laces, worth even the price of Mussolino himself, bowed their heads absorbed in prayer.

Suddenly through the great carved wooden doors, where St. Sebastian and St. Anselmo are figrued in mold relief, came a figure, small self-reliant, enveloped in a long black mantle. In one swift glance he swept the church from end to end, seeming to mark out individuals from among the kneeling throng.

Then an instant he stood before the Holy Font. He dropped the heavy lashes over his black eyes and seemed to pray, as he reverently crossed himself. He had taken off his black silk baretta, and on his cheek a deep scar was plainly visible. A whisper ran from mouth to mouth, "Mussolino."

He smiled sadly and approached the shrine of the Mother of Hope in the chancel to the left of the center aisle. There he knelt in prayer, serene, composed. The next moment he had disappeared with a light wave of his cap. None had dared approach him. He went as he had come—unmolested.

The next morning Judge Zizilli was discovered dead in his office.

Mussolino had retreated once more to his forests.

It is no wonder that at times the soldiers could find no trace of Mussolino in the mountains, for he was not there. He made excursions to various foreign countries, and got as far as Bulgaria, where he became a member of the notorious Bulgarian bandit Kaio's gang. He admired Kaio greatly and learned a great many of his ways. But he always loved to get back to his Calabrian mountains again.

Mussolino has always maintained that he killed his enemies merely to punish wicked injustice. The peasants and mountaineers believe him implicitly. Furthermore, he has only taxed the rich to supply his necessities. To the poor he has always been generous.

Why He Renewed His Youth.

"Why, Brother Dickey, I hardly knew you, you're looking so young and spry. What's up now?"

"Well, suh, I'ze studyin' 'bout gittin' married ergin, dat's all."

"Getting married?"

"Yes, suh. I made de 'quaintance er a young gal terday, en she 'lowed dat ef I'd shave off my gray whiskers, en chop off de hair what on my head, en stop limpin' wid de rheumatism, en wear cloze what come out de sto,' en smoke se-gars stidder pipe, en stop preachin' 'gin dancin', en secure my life in her favor fer a hundred dollars she'd marry me. Dat how come I look so young!"

Old newspapers save work in the kitchen. When you have any "messy" task on hand like dressing a chicken, pickling over fruit, etc., lay a paper on the table, gather the litter up with it and burn all together. This saves scouring the table.

NOT GUILTY

Grant Crumly Acquitted of the Murder of Sam Strong.

THE ROMANCE AND CRIME

How Murdered Millionaire Wooed and Won His Wife—Her Devotion and Imperishable Love For the Man Who Picked Her Up a Barefoot Girl—Inconsolable Over His Tragic Death.

Grant Crumley has been acquitted by a Cripple Creek jury of the murder of Sam Strong. The verdict was that the killing was done in self defense. The decision is generally regarded as quite just and adds another link to a romantic chain of incidents—one of the most romantic love tales yet told in the big stirring West.

It is a modern version of King Cophetua and the beggar maid.

The beggar maid, however, was not literally such; only poor; very, very poor when the king of money-makers came her way.

Her name was Regina Neville.

At sixteen a ragged, barefoot girl in the mining regions of Colorado.

At eighteen a widow with a fortune in her own right of $1,000,000.

At sixteen without money to purchase even the coarsest quality of shoes or the cheapest calico for a gown.

At eighteen one of the wealthiest mine owners in the Southwest, with a wardrobe that a princess might sigh enviously to possess.

From a log cabin in a mountain wilderness to a palatial home in Denver. From humblest obscurity and poverty to social prominence and the brilliant haunts of wealth.

Strangely interesting, is it not, this story of Regina Neville's extraordinary transition from the least that a world can give a woman to the most that it can bestow?

It was love that wrought the miraculous change in her affairs. And never did Cupid do his usually mischievous work to kinder advantage. Never did woman more gratefully bear the honors and favors heaped upon her. Never, indeed, was love's tale prettier than this one.

Two years ago no girl of sixteen in all the great state of Colorado was more beautiful than Regina Neville. None could have been poorer.

To-day it can still be said that no young woman of eighteen in Colorado is more beautiful than Regina Strong. None, it is declared, is richer.

Crowded with incident have been the past two years for Mrs. Strong. During those twenty-four months she has known what it is to be transported from lonely mountain cabin in Colorado to the gay boulevards of Paris, and back to Colorado as the mistress of a magnificent home. Maid, wife, widow—all these has she been in those eventful two years.

Her father was a poor man and a discouraged one. For years fate had gone steadily against him. Other miners around him had made their "pile" while he toiled on unrewarded. With his wife and daughter he lived in a cabin a stone's throw from the famous Bonanza Strong Mine. His only riches lay in the possession of the woman and the child who bore his name. It gratified him that the petite slip of a girl growing up among the miners at Victor was the prettiest object in all the country round, and that there was not a man amoung the miners who would not take the longest route to his work it he could get a glimpse of her face on the way.

The change came suddenly.

One day the owner of the Bonanza Strong Mine was making his solitary way along the trail from Midway to the Free Coinage Mine. To his surprise he came face to face with a distractingly pretty girl, sixteen years old. The trail was narrow and he stepped aside respectfully to let her pass.

The girl raised her eyes indifferently to his as she went by. They were lovely eyes. That glance marked the turning point in her life, for by it she won the heart of the bluff miner—won it by a single sweep of the long lashes. Then she went steadily on, forgetting the next moment the big stranger, more than twice her years, who had looked at her pretty face with such ardent admiration.

Sam Strong did not care that the girl was shabbily dressed and barefooted. He saw that she was uncommonly attractive and graceful, and that she carried with much care a bundle of school books under her arm.

To the first man he met he put the question: "Who is the pretty barefoot girl around these diggings?"

"Old man Neville's daughter," was the prompt reply. It was the easiest question to answer that could have been asked. Who, indeed, could it be but Regina Neville?

Sam Strong lost no time in his wooing. He went straight to the little log cabin that housed his divinity, and told John Neville point blank that he wanted to marry his daughter. There was little of entreaty in his manner. He was perfectly well aware that he had millions and that the father had nothing, and figured that such a suitor would not be dismissed. But Neville was too fond of his daughter to urge her to any marriage that might be objectionable to her, and so he told Strong that he must do his own courting in his own way; that he would not interfere; if he could win her he would not withhold his consent. In short, Regina might do exactly as she pleased about marrying any man, rich or poor.

What happened after that, happened quickly. Sam Strong was an impatient wooer. And although Regina had never had a sweetheart and although her head was filled with thoughts of lessons rather than lovers, and Strong was by no means the youthful mate whom one would have chosen for the peachy cheeked child of the mountains, matters came to precisely the climax that Strong was determined they should. Regina, forsooth, fell as madly in love with him as he had fallen in love with her on the trail the day they met.

She stayed in love, too. She stayed so steadfastly that, now he is dead and gone, she is grieving her young heart in melancholy solitude, refusing to be comforted.

The wedding took place in simplest fashion in the little log cabin.

Regina wore shoes for the first time on her wedding day. She was radiant as a rose, in a plain white muslin frock that she made for her bridal gown with her own hands. A white ribbon held the unruly brown mass of hair neatly in place.

In a week the bride and groom were away on their wedding tour, en route to Europe.

They stopped in New York long enough for the adoring husband to buy expensive finery sufficient to last the average woman for years. The girl who had gone barefoot in Colorado lived like a Princess in New York. Nothing that her husband could find there was quite good enough for her. He gave her 100 diamonds of large size and exceeding brilliancy. The finest footwear was made to order for her little sunburned feet that now were covered with the softest of silken hose.

They took steamer for Paris. There Strong spent money lavishly upon his petite possession, delighting in loading her with the richest of silks, the handsomest of jewels. He told her that she should have a palatial house built for her when they got back to Denver, and he was as good as his word.

They returned, and the gossips say to this day that a more affectionate pair never made their abode in Denver. They were never separated for so much as a day. The time went happily by.

Early in the fall of this year Strong's mining business called him to Cripple Creek. He intended being absent several days. His wife, not feeling well enough to accompany him, begged him not to go. Strange, gloomy forebodings seized her fancy.

Strong, laughed lightly at her fears and said good-bye, promising to telephone to her every day. But she sobbed and clung to him in a frightened way, and finally he had to put her gently away from him and close the door.

He never recrossed the threshold of his home.

Arriving at Cripple Creek Stronge met his father-in-law, John Neville. As is the custom in mining camps, the two men at once stepped into a saloon to take a drink together.

What happened afterward was told to the jury which sat upon the case of the People vs. Grant Crumley.

While in the saloon, which was also a gambling house, Strong became fascinated with the game, though Neville and other friends endeavored to get him away. This action on their part greatly incensed Crumley, proprietor of the place. When Strong finally quit $150 ahead and "cashed in," Crumley charged Neville and the others with trying to pull a man away from the game when he wanted to play. "In future I want no knockers around my place," he said. Strong was angry at the imputation cast upon his father-in-law, and quickly pulled a gun.

"No man can talk like that to my 'daddy,'" he said.

Crumley instantly fired, and Strong fell without a groan.

The grief of his beautiful young widow has been intense and sincere.

In the management of the estate she has shown good sense and excellent judgment. She set about at once to pay off all claims. She hunted up Strong's relatives and provided liberally for them, thus preventing contests in the courts. Then she rented the splendid home which had become unbearably reminiscent of past happiness, and withdrew with her parents to a comfortable cottage, where she is living in complete retirement.

Sam Strong was not the best of men, but his wife thought him perfection. Marriage did not mar her romance. To her he seemed as great as did King Cophetua to the beggar maid. She worships the memory of the man who crossed her path when she was a barefooted school girl on the mining camp trail.

Providing For a Wayward Son.

Lord Chesterfield gave advice to his son in sundry letters, which might or might not be followed, but in his will he took good care that "my godson, Philip Stanhope," should have strong inducement to follow his advice on at least one point. All the bequests are subject to the condition that if Philip should keep race horses or hounds or stay one night at Newmarket, "that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill manners," during the course of the races there, or should lose on any one day by betting or gaming as much as £500, then in such case he shall forfeit £5,000 to the dean and chapter of Westminster for every such offense.

Unfortunately.

They were driving together when Miss Rocks, unsolicited, gurgled forth her views on matrimony. Love is a dreary desert," she said, "and marriage an oasis," whereupon Mr. Shyly remarked that "certainly it did require a deal of sand."